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CENTER SCENE

The Bureau of Land Management Service Center Newsletter *September 1987*

Horses and Inmates

There's an exciting BLM program in our own backyard; that is if you accept our backyard as being 130 miles southwest of here. It's the Colorado Wild Horse Inmate Program (CWHIP).

Prison inmates at the Canon City Correctional Facility are gentling and breaking BLM wild horses to make them more adoptable. The Program, a cooperative venture with the Colorado Department of Corrections and the National Organization for Wild American Horses, NOWAH, has just celebrated its first anniversary. And what a successful year it's been!

Each entity contributes to the effort. BLM is responsible for providing the horses and their transportation. The prison has the perfect facilities—a beautiful, old ranch/dairy farm—and plenty of able-bodied laborers. NOWAH provides the training that includes classroom veterinary instruction, ferrier and forge lessons, and lots of hands-on experience with the horses.

Everyone involved in CWHIP recognizes and appreciates its benefits. The inmates' days are filled with activity that's truly meaningful. Not only does the time pass more quickly for them, but they're also building marketable skills and valuable experience for the future. The prison is pleased to have a program that can provide work for up to 30 inmates at once, one that has made great strides in teaching the participants a strong work ethic. BLM and NOWAH's concerns for the horses are met. In fact, having observed the evolution of the Program it's hard to imagine the horses receiving any more affection or better care than they do in prison! Adopters benefit, too. They are able to obtain a very different horse than was originally available from the "Adopt A Wild Horse Program."

The human/animal bonds that develop are remarkable and quite wonderful. One inmate has actually adopted several horses. Another who has been released has a good job working with horses, and several others are beginning to make serious career plans for the "outside."

The Program started small—a dozen men and fifty horses, but it's growing. Now the prison functions as a small-scale holding facility with 300 horses ready to meet their new trainers. The women's facility has successfully experimented with a similar program, although it is not currently in operation.

The Technology Transfer Staff has been working with the Canon City District and Colorado State Offices during the last few months to produce a series of video products about CWHIP. They include a short tape for BLM's booth at the Great Western Stock Show, public service announcements for television, and a 26-minute feature, entitled "Winners." SC employees may arrange to see "Winners" by calling 6-6406. Field offices may obtain copies through Colorado SO Public Affairs Staff.

Van Haveren on IPA

"One of the most rewarding assignments I've had in my professional career." That's how Bruce Van Haveren, a Division of Resources Hydrologist, describes his current IPA assignment to the Colorado School of Mines. The IPA, or Intergovernmental Personnel Act, program allows Federal employees to be loaned to State agencies, or State employees to be loaned to Federal agencies for specified periods of time—usually 2 years.

Bruce has been serving as a Visiting Professor of Environmental Sciences at the School of Mines since September 1986. In addition to teaching graduate and undergraduate courses, he is serving on two graduate committees, reviewing research projects, writing a watershed rehabilitation handbook for BLM, and developing a microcomputer expert system for development of reclamation plans. Bruce has also guest-lectured on hydrology and disturbed-land reclamation at Mines and Colorado State University.

Ask Bruce what he likes best about college teaching and he will tell you, "I love the interaction with the students, sharing my professional knowledge with them. They are really hungry for useful, pragmatic information. And they make me feel young again!"

AIRS

The Automated Inspection Records System (AIRS) is the first standard Bureauwide microcomputer-based application. It was developed and implemented in FY 85 and early 1986.

AIRS is a decentralized data base system residing on microcomputers located in 34 inspection offices nationwide. The menu-driven software was developed by D-223 using an off-the-shelf, fourth generation, data base management system. The program and data are used in inspection offices on a daily basis to manage oil and gas leases on Federal and Indian lands.

AIRS was and is an interesting project. Its design was based on fairly simple concepts. However, when work first began on AIRS it was not known if it would even fit on a microcomputer. And there was very little microcomputer programming expertise in D-220. Testing the AIRS concept on micros, evaluating software, and learning a lot of new things was the order of the day for the project team.

The team also faced an unusual deadline. AIRS was replacing an automated system on a Honeywell MULTICS computer operated by the Geological Survey. They wanted to unplug that particular computer on October 1, 1986, which led to an intense and very busy year for everyone involved.

To make AIRS a successful effort, there was training and follow-up support for users and dedication and commitment of users in operating and managing the system. AIRS was implemented in a 6-week period during August and September of 1986. Users were brought to the SC for a week, given their equipment and data, shown how to set it up, trained on the use of AIRS software, and then returned to the field with working systems. The SC established a "hot line" to provide additional assistance for users.

AIRS has settled down to a smoothly running, gradually maturing system. It has made a positive contribution to the changing world of automation in the Bureau.

Wildlife Handbook Published

After nearly 4 years, BLM's **Inventory and Monitoring of Wildlife Habitat** has been published. Some vital statistics: it has 874 pages, is hard-bound, printed in full color, and comprehensive in scope; it features 42 chapters written by specialists from government, universities, and the private sector.

Intended for both land and wildlife management personnel in the BLM and in other Federal, State, and private agencies, the book will help biologists determine critical issues, identify priority species, and conduct cost-effective inventory and monitoring programs. Because there is no other text like this on the market, it is expected to be used in universities teaching wildlife and habitat management.

In addition to chapters on habitat types and species groups, there are chapters on planning inventories and monitoring studies; using computers for data management; and preparing effective written and verbal presentations.

The book was compiled and edited by Allen Cooperrider, Ray Boyd, and Hans Stuart. It was designed by Shirley McCulloch with major illustrations by Peter Doran and Shirley McCulloch. Jan Poorman served as technical editor and Margaret McGinnis as copy editor.

Lots of other people throughout the SC had a hand in this effort—the wildlife handbook is something all of us can be proud of! For more information about the handbook, contact Allen Cooperrider (D-470).

DOI's FIRM

The Department is currently working toward adopting one standard accounting system by all Interior Bureaus and Offices. This effort, known as FIRM (Financial Integration Review for Management), was begun about three years ago. The public accounting firm of Arthur Young was hired to do an extensive study of each Bureau and recommend a system as well as methodology for converting the Bureaus. Arthur Young recommended the accounting system used by the Office of the Secretary.

The Department subsequently decided that the system was too small to accommodate the financial activities of the larger Bureaus, including BLM. They then decied to purchase off-the-shelf software; this effort is currently under way with Geological Survey (USGS) taking the lead. BLM's conversion date of FY 90 is part of the current plan.

The system the Department is attempting to purchase must be capable of running on an IBM or IBM-compatible mainframe computer. DOI intends to buy software to be installed at USGS in Reston, VA, and at a Denver site (Bureau not yet determined).

Any system purchased must be flexible enough to accommodate the diverse needs of all the Bureaus. In BLM for example, the software must interface with other administrative systems (e.g., personal property) as well as those relating to resources (e.g., range and lease). The standard software must also accommodate the budget process.

Pittman Retires

It seems that in one way or another Jerry Pittman has worked for the government for almost his entire adult life. He started in 1943 with a stint in the Air Force and ended with his retirement this July as a BLM Cadastral Surveyor.

Jerry's career as a surveyor began in 1946 in Cheyenne, WY. He had been working for United Airlines, and when United pulled out of Cheyenne, he was out of work. Jerry said his guardian angel must have been sitting on his shoulder, for as he sat in a cafe, with just enough money for the bus fare home tucked in the top of his boot, he heard a man across from him complaining that he couldn't find anyone to work. Jerry started talking to the man and learned he was a surveyor who had injured his neck and needed someone to read the instruments. Jerry took the job. He started as a notekeeper-rodman for Geological Survey.

He soon discovered that surveying was the career he wanted. He had a background in mathematics and knew navigation from the Air Force. He served as a surveying aide, and took correspondence courses and classes in the evening to become a surveyor.

In the 1950's surveying became a family affair for the Pittmans when Jerry talked his wife Amy into living at camp and becoming the cook. So Amy and the three children Jerry Jr., Michael and Mable joined dad at work.

Jerry joined BLM in 1956. He will continue teaching an advanced Cadastral Survey training course after he retires.

New Role at SC

The Service Center recently added a new role to its long list of responsibilities. With GSA delegation of authority, the SC can now lease office and warehouse space for BLM field offices.

There are some strings attached—BLM has to lease its space outside major metropolitan areas. GSA still does the leasing in places like Denver and Portland. And BLM must first see if there is any GSA-owned or leased space available to meet our needs. If not, BLM can lease from the local market. Finally, the SC has to follow numerous GSA guidelines: 135 square feet per work station, adequate competition in the bidding process, etc.

The Branch of Real Property gets the ball rolling by developing a special requirements package. This lists the square footage needed and identifies any special needs, such as sound-proofing for conference rooms or exhaust fans and electrical outlets for a laboratory. SC employees work closely with field offices in determining all special requirements and generally travel to the office site at least once. Once all requirements are known, the Branch of Procurement solicits bids and awards the lease.

As the SC becomes more involved in leasing, plans call for hiring an interior designer (or space planner, to use the official term). This person would assist field offices in developing a pleasant and efficient interior design scheme.

More than a dozen leasing projects are already in the mill. These include a new Resource Area Office in Bishop, CA; a District Office for Eugene, OR; and a new Resource Area Office in Great Falls, MT.

"This program is very exciting for us," notes Gery Behr, Chief of the Branch of Real Property. "It gives us the opportunity to meet field office's needs more directly and effectively."

"It means a lot more work for us," concludes Gery, "but the results will be worth it."

Burrito Breakfast

By popular demand, the "Burrito Breakfast" will be repeated as part of this year's Hispanic Heritage Week Observance, September 17 and 18. The theme is "Hispanics: A Proud History. . . Enhancing America's Future." Watch for further details.

Time wounds all heels